

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 20-22, and 24-26 have been amended. Claims 25 and 26 have been cancelled. No new matter has been presented. Thus, claims 1-7 and 9-24 remain pending in the application. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below, and reconsideration of all rejected claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 101

In item 4 on pages 2-3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In particular, the Examiner concluded that a signal "is considered non-statutory because it is a form of energy, in the absence of any physical structure or tangible material, that does not fall within any of the four statutory classes of 35 U.S.C. § 101."

Applicants have cancelled claims 25 and 26, thereby rendering the Examiner's rejection of the claims moot.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 102

In item 6 on pages 4-8 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 6-7, 20, 22, 24, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,938,727, issued to Ikeda (hereinafter referred to as "Ikeda"). Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of the claims.

According to Ikeda, when a user who has discovered an object in a printed medium has the affixed barcode scanned by a scanner, software incorporated into the user's personal computer operates to convert the barcode to a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) to allow World Wide Web (WWW) client software to recognize the Locator. See Ikeda, column 4, lines 32-37.

In Ikeda, a telephone number, a facsimile number, a URL of a homepage, or an email address is recorded in a barcode or in a two-dimensional code, the barcode or the two-dimensional code is affixed onto a business card, an advertisement on a newspaper, or the like. A PC of a consumer side reads out the barcode, or the two-dimensional code, and the PC then conducts the transmission. In other words, the two-dimensional barcode basically includes four kinds of individual identification information (Column 6, Lines 32-34).

As reflected in currently amended claim 1, the present invention stores information that an enterprise side conveys to a consumer side and transmission destination of information that the consumer side conveys to the enterprise side. See specification of the present invention,

page 7, lines 20-25.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 20, 22, and 24 are patentable over Ikeda, as Ikeda fails to teach each and every element of the claims of the present invention (claim 26 has been cancelled). In particular, for example, Ikeda fails to disclose, "wherein the conveyance information includes provision information that the information provider side provides to the consumer side and return information for returning the reply information," as recited in the currently amended independent claims.

On page 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Ikeda's barcode, representing a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address, can be interpreted as "return information, as an address is needed for returning reply information."

Applicants respectfully submit that Ikeda does not provide return information for returning reply information, as in the present invention. In Ikeda, the URL in the barcode is not return information. The barcode is simply information that was installed by the barcode provider. There is no reply in Ikeda. Rather, the barcode is simply scanned to retrieve a URL, which is accessed by a client. The client does not provide a reply. Therefore, there is no return information in Ikeda.

Further, in Ikeda, a configuration is disclosed in which a Uniform Resource Locator (URL), a telephone/FAX number, an e-mail address of a destination are stored in a barcode or related to a barcode, and the access is performed by obtaining the URL, etc., from the read barcode. That is, only contact information of the destination is included in the code. A user cannot obtain information until the user contacts the destination.

In contrast, the present invention includes not only the contact information but also the provision information that an information provider wishes to convey to consumers in a barcode for printing and distribution. Therefore, the information to be conveyed is originally different. In addition, the present invention differs in that a plurality of pieces of return information to be returned from the consumer (user) to the information provider is included in the code, which can be selected by the consumer. Hence, the present invention's configuration includes both the information conveyed from the information provider to the consumer and the method for a user to convey information to the information provider.

In light of the foregoing, claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 20, 22, and 24 are patentable over the references, as Ikeda does not teach return information.

On page 15 of the Office Action, claims 1-7, 9-23, 25, and 26 were rejected under 35

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U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,845,388 (Philyaw) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,938,727 (Ikeda).

As previously argued, Ikeda does not teach return information for returning reply information. Ikeda also does not suggest the feature, as there is no reply information to be returned.

Although Philyaw discloses a transmission station and a receive station, no information is disclosed or suggested regarding return information for returning reply information.

Therefore, the pending claims of the present invention are patentable over the references, as neither Ikeda nor Philyaw, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the above-identified feature of the claims.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after the response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to the matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of the Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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